

Fighting Repression and Machismo in El Salvador

by Line St-Amour

Do women fight along side men in the battle field? The question was directed to Liliane Coreas, a Salvadorian woman and representative of the women's association of El Salvador known as AMES (Asociacion de Mujeres de El Salvador).

She didn't seem to hear me. The question was too direct, too North American. "Let me tell you my story, and how women are participating in the inevitable social change of our country for our people." The story began and no more questions were asked.

"I'm, the youngest of a family of seven. When my father died, my mother was left alone to take care of us. She had to make a living for the family, she sold food in the street. We lived in the shantytown where water and adequate food were not always available. My brothers went to school up to grade 3 and 4. I, being the youngest had the chance to finish grade 8. By this time every one was contributing to the existence of the family. I started working at the age of seventeen in a factory, going to school at night. It was then that I began to get involved with the student movement."

Liliane kept talking. Her words told the history of the struggle and repression lived by her people.

Her hopes are for equality. "Women are not only oppressed by the government but also by their 'role'." Women are considered the weaker sex. She has little chance to become educated. "Women in El Salvador are not allowed to belong to farmworker's unions, although they work along with men. In the system of migrant labour, only men are under contract, with right to wages and daily food allowance. If women work in the factory they are paid 25% less than men, and even the men make extremely low wages. Discrimination against a woman begins with the unpaid labour she puts into the survival of the family. She is also confronted with sexual harassment. If she works

as a factory worker or as a domestic, it is expected that as an "empleada" she will service her boss and the sons of the family sexually. If she refuses, she loses her job.

Women in El Salvador are also the focus of North American propaganda through the promotion of family planning by the Salvadorean Population Association. The goal is to reduce population in order to reduce social conflict. "Birth control programs are only known in urban areas where pills are distributed free. But they are discontinued in U.S., because they are outdated or a health risk."

Liliane kept talking. "I had to leave the country because of my political involvement. We young people are considered evil and subversives because we have ideas and great hopes for a new society...Of course women fight along with men, shoulder to shoulder. Some women are commandants and some batallions are all women. At first, men could not accept the new role of the women. It used to be that in military maneuvers men would always cover for the women when they had to retreat. It was a macho game. But this is breaking down. Men are doing the same chores women are doing: cooking, cleaning, taking care of the injured and being 'mother' to their infants. Although men have realized for a long time that roles had to change, it's taken a while for them to internalize it, to act on it. They no longer say, 'that's not my job'. Instead it's



becoming automatic to work collectively."

Liliane and her "compagneras" foresee a better life for the women and the children. The collective effort to overcome repression is, and will be, a continuous effort for equality. Time is now a friend. Salvadorean men were not born to be slave labourers and the Salvadorean women were not born to receive the

animosity of their fellow men.

Women organizations such as the AMES is fighting for basic needs of women and organizing all women — peasants, shantytown women, workers, students and housewives. Although many women are still oppressed by the traditional role, the liberation of their country will continue to provide hope for their freedom.

Menstrual Pain Killer Effectiveness Tested

by Suzy Coulter

As of June 1983, over 20 women would have taken part in a period pain study conducted at University Health Services. The study is testing the effectiveness of the pain killer Diflunisal in combatting menstrual cramps.

Diflunisal is not new to the medical profession. As a chemically modified cousin of aspirin it has been used in the treatment of arthritic pains, especially in the aged, over the past year. It's prospective usage in the treatment of period pains, is however, a recent development.

"It is not the safety of the drug that we are testing, but rather its effectiveness. The Phase One Clinical Trial tested safely; we are now conducting Phase Two, dealing merely with the drug's effectiveness," explained Dr. Sandra Taylor, who is carrying out the UVic division of the nation wide study.

Unlike narcotic medications often prescribed for the treatment of menstrual cramps, Diflunisal does not contain codeine. It is thus non-addictive. Yet researchers expect that side effects caused by Diflunisal will be similar to those brought on by codeine medications.

Diflunisal differs from both nar-

cotic and aspirin prescriptions in that it is an anti-prostaglandin, acting directly on the cramp itself. It is hoped that by releasing the pressure and tension of the cramp, overall pre-menstrual discomfort will be lessened.

Women volunteering for the study will use Diflunisal over the course of three menstrual cycles, noting all effects on cramps as well as other pre-menstrual irritations.

As are all medical studies conducted in Canada, the UVic research has been approved by the Canadian Food and Drug Commission. The study has also been approved by the UVic Human Subjects Committee. This committee consists of the Dean of Graduate Studies (or a nominee) who serves as a Chairman, the University Solicitor, the director of University Health Services, and up to two others who can provide specialized advice in each case. The Human Subjects Committee is designed to ensure the protection, safety, and welfare of the subjects. The right to an informed consent and a withdrawal at any time are assured also.

Women wanting more information about the study should contact Dr. Sandra Taylor at Health Services.

One Out of Four

by Nancy Lewis

Sexual assault is an alarming problem in our society. According to Barbara Fields, a coordinator of the Women's Sexual Assault Centre, one out of four girls and one out of ten boys become victims by the time they are 18.

Fields spoke to a group of students recently, and showed Bonnie Krep's (Not a Love Story) "This Film is About Rape".

The movie includes an interview with a woman in her late fifties. She was assaulted by a young man who "looked like my grandson". She got into his truck when he asked her for directions. He drove to a field in Langley and tried to rape her. He said: "I've killed for this before and I wouldn't hesitate to do it again." So-

meone walking nearby scared the man off, and so, in this case, the woman escaped.

Also interviewed were several rapists in a Washington prison. One said there was "no particular reason I chose the woman I did...To say she was attractive was just a justification...It could have been anybody that happened to be in the area."

He described how he stepped into his victim's car at a shopping centre parking lot. Holding a gun to her side, he directed her out of town. After the rape he left her by the road and drove the car back, leaving the keys under the seat.

The movie stated over half the rapists who come out of jail rape again.

It seems there is a definite link between rape and cultural stereotypes. The rapist is an exaggeration of the "masculine mystique" which equates superiority with sexual dominance and masculinity with aggression. Women are encouraged to be attractive physically and emotionally by being sexy and passive. They are often not equipped with verbal or physical self-defense skills.

The Sexual Assault Centre can help women deal with the trauma of sexual assault. They guarantee anonymity and provide counselling and personal support. For more information about the Victoria Women's Sexual Assault Centre call 383-5545. 24 hour crisis line 383-3232.

Culhane — Barred from Prison

by Nora Ready

Claire Culhane would not likely draw hundreds of people to the University Centre to hear her speak. Her name is not as familiar as, for example, Noam Chomsky. She's not a world renowned academic, but she is an author, an activist and someone Chomsky referred to as a friend and colleague during his recent lecture series.

Culhane lives in Vancouver and visited the campus for the Chomsky lectures. An expert on Canada's involvement in Vietnam and prisoners' rights, Culhane talked to me about women in prisons and her own involvement in social justice issues.

Culhane was born in the east-end of Montreal in 1918. "I wanted to be a doctor but my brother, being a boy and older, got the training." By profession Culhane is a medical record librarian. "I started out as a nurse. In the training pamphlet it said, 'Never sacrifice the soul of your work for the technique'. I believed them! It got me into a lot of trouble."

In 1967 Culhane was an administrator of the government sponsored Canadian Tuberculosis Hospital in South

Vietnam. She returned from Vietnam believing "a true humanitarian must also be a political being." Besides doing civil disobedience to draw attention to Canada's involvement in the war, Culhane wrote the book *Why is Canada in Vietnam?* Since then she has delivered papers at international conferences reporting on her first hand knowledge of Canadian involvement in South East Asia.

"This guy on T.V. once asked me how come I'm always on the losing side. He forgot it was us who lost in Vietnam. Only when we have a caring society, one with no prisons, will we all win."

After becoming a member of the Citizens Advisory Committee at the British Columbia Penitentiary, she became active in their Prisoner Rights Group. Culhane feels that feminists, while looking at the related issues of women in poverty, violence against women, and native women's concerns, still ignore women in prison. "It's very often these women who end up in jails. We have to look at prisons when looking at these other issues or we miss the last step. Why is it that in the provincial jails in the prairie provinces some 80% to 90% of the female prisoners are native?"

In response to whether she thought racism is a problem in the feminist movement, Culhane stated, "We have to acknowledge it is happening and not allow it to continue."

Women represent a minority of those in prison. "There

are far less women in jail, so really they are less 'cost effective', to put it in government terms," said Culhane. "It costs an average of \$62,000 per year to keep a woman in jail, as opposed to \$50,000 per year for her male counterpart."

Is there a reason for the vast number difference between male and female prisoners? Are perhaps more women re-routed to psychiatric hospitals in response to their anti-social behaviour, instead of to prisons?

"Yes, I think so," said Culhane "It's easier to shove them into beds and throw pills at them."

Culhane mentioned a women's jail in California which has set up a life skills program. "Do you know what one of the most popular courses is? 'How to Handle Your Psychiatrist'."

Recently the women's unit of Oakalla, the federal penitentiary in Burnaby, won a small victory for prisoner's rights. Culhane explained, "The prison authorities wanted to introduce catering. These women have their own kitchen, which would have been taken away from them. They would no longer be able to prepare their own meals. Well, they fought the catering and won." Culhane is not allowed to visit the unit. "They tell me it's in 'the best interest of the institution'. That's no rule of law, and I'm fighting it."

In 1976 Culhane was one of the mediators at the B.C. Penitentiary eruption. That experience resulted in her book *Barred From Prison*. In May of 1983 she attended the International Conference on Prison Abolition. More than ever she believes the prison system "isn't working and never has worked." Women prisoners internationally are primarily jailed for non-violent crimes. "There are obvious alternatives," said Culhane "The many who are not violent don't need to be in jail."

In Culhane's view, coalition groups and networking seems to be an effective way to organize for change. "When you start working in coalition you often find you've got a lot of allies you hadn't counted on. In Europe it's happening. Let's face it, we're all fighting the same rotten system." As a prison rights activist she sees links between political protestors and the prison issue. "There are over 5,000 people in U.S. jails for nuclear protesting," she said.

Culhane feels that change must come about through education and confrontation. "When I say education and action, I mean civil disobedience."

A veteran of political activism, Culhane never the less does not condone violence. "You play into the hands of the system when you're violent, and get left holding the bag. The minute you can't control on a non-violent basis, you can jeopardize everything."

Culhane smiled and said, "I've got a T-shirt at home that reads 'Patience is a revolutionary virtue', I'm sixty-five. I've been at this a long time."

Non-Sexist Birth Control

by Nancy Lewis

- the Pill
- the IUD
- the diaphragm
- the cervical cap

Confused?

Women concerned about the effects of various devices and drugs may not have considered the ovulation method. This little-known birth control program is also known as the Billings method, named after the Australian couple, both doctors, who first began disseminating information about it. It is based on the daily observation and recording of the changes that occur as a woman progresses through her monthly cycle. It allows her to become aware of her fertility and know when intercourse will result in pregnancy.

This system should not be confused with other fertility awareness methods. The rhythm method relies on an "average" cycle as its marker, while the ovulation method is based on daily observation. When calculating fertile and infertile days the ovulation method takes into account abnormal cycles.

Another well-known method involves a daily charting of temperature; a slight rise indicates ovulation, but only after the fact. Stress or illness can cause irregularities. The ovulation method warns of impending ovulation, and is not affected by health factors.

Every woman's cycle begins with the onset of menstruation. Once the flow of blood has stopped, most women have one to several infertile days. The approaching fertile period is signalled by a vaginal discharge, called mucus. Once a woman becomes aware of her cycles, it will be obvious to her when the mucus has begun. It is characterized by a sensation of wetness around the opening of the vagina. A woman may also notice wetness on her underwear.

At the beginning of the wet period, the mucus is usually thick and white or milky, but it will change and become clearer, stringy and slippery as ovulation approaches. The mucus can be

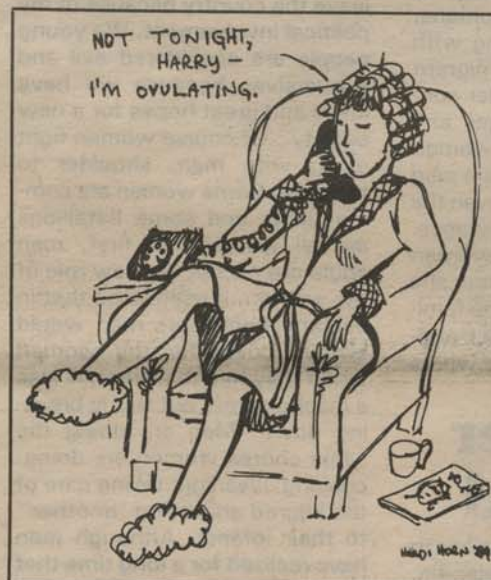
checked by touching the vulva with two fingers at a convenient time; for example, immediately before urination. The clearer mucus will form a shimmery strand when stretched between the fingers. This is the most fertile type of mucus and is specially designed to aid the sperm in reaching the egg. After anywhere from an hour to a few days of stretchy, slippery mucus, it will abruptly stop. This is the signal that ovulation has occurred. A period of twelve to sixteen days of dryness will follow, and menstruation will signal the beginning of the next cycle.

While using this method, a woman must avoid intercourse when she is menstruating. The flow of blood may mask an early ovulation with its accompanying mucus. During the early dry days, before the mucus and after menstruation, intercourse must be confined to every other night. This is to be sure that the mucus has not begun. The fluid deposited by the man could be mistaken for mucus. After ovulation, the Billings recommend a three-day "grace" period of abstinence to be sure that the mucus has really stopped. Then the couple is free to have intercourse any time until the onset of menstruation.

The number of days of abstinence varies from couple to couple and from cycle to cycle. This should not be seen as an obstacle to couples who truly care about each other. The ovulation method can bring couples closer together and help them understand each other's bodies. It encourages them to look for new ways to be together. Because it requires the active participation and informed decision of both man and woman, it has been called the only non-sexist form of birth control.

The ovulation method will work best for couples who can trust each other. A woman who is aware of her body's cycle feels more confident about her physical self. An advantage of this method is that abnormalities that occur quickly become apparent.

The method has been tested all over the world by the World



Health Organization. Because it is simple and free many Third World women can use it, and do. If used correctly, it is reliable and safe. If you feel skeptical about the ovulation method, try noticing sensations and marking them on your calendar. (This will not work if you're on the Pill). As you begin to have confidence in your observations, you may change your mind about the ovulation method.

It can be difficult to find out about the method. Health Services on campus will tell you that they have heard of it. They have

no printed information and did not discuss it in their recent birth control seminars. Ask your doctor; if she or he has no information on it, and many don't, request that they get some.

Look for some books on the subject; they are intermittently available at Everywoman's and Sri Atman Bookstores. The women's centre on campus has the books listed below, and also pamphlets prepared by some students as an Environmental Studies project last year.

In Vancouver, look in on the Vancouver Women's Health Col-

lective which has a lot of valuable information and a friendly staff. There is also an office of the World Organization of the Ovulation Method, located in Coquitlam.

Books to look for:
The Personal Fertility Crisis (1980) Terri Guay
A Cooperative Method of Natural Birth Control (1976) Margaret Nofxiger
 anything by Drs. John and/or Evelyn Billings
Our Bodies Our Selves (1979) Boston Women's Health Collective

<p>THE THINGS WE DO FOR SEX</p> <p>TAMPAX COMMERCIALS MAKE IT SEEM THAT WE "EMANCIPATED" WOMEN HAVE NEVER HAD IT SO GOOD.</p>	<p>YET, AS FAR AS BIRTH CONTROL GOES, WE'RE WAY BEHIND.</p>	<p>WE HAVE A CHOICE: ① FODDLING WITH OUR HORMONES AND GOD KNOWS WHAT ELSE.</p>	<p>③ GOOPING OUR INSIDES UP WITH SPERMICIDES (EVERY CERVICAL LINING SHOULD HAVE SOME).</p>	<p>④ THE INFAMOUS, TREACHEROUS IUD \$ 997</p>	<p>ANYWAY YOU CHANCE TO LOSE.</p>
<p>ARE WE VICTIMS OF THE FACT THAT THE MEN WHO INVENTED, DEVELOPED, MANUFACTURED AND FINANCED THESE SYSTEMS MAY NOT HAVE BEEN KEEN ON HAVING TO USE A TYPE OF BIRTH CONTROL ON THEMSELVES, therefore, I propose...</p>	<p>ALTERNATE FORMS OF BIRTH CONTROL (TO SHARE THE BURDEN A LITTLE).</p> <p>Very effective and no more barbaric →</p>	<p>① THE ELECTRIC PETER-HEATER - reduces sperm counts by up to 50% in one day!</p> <p>Batteries not included</p>	<p>② INJECT-A-CIDE. Kills sperm dead, dead, dead. one shot lasts two weeks!</p>	<p>③ CASTRATO-CLIPS - clips easily onto your vas deferens and stops those sperm from flowing!</p> <p>Note: stop use if irritation results.</p>	<p>ARE WE TRULY ONLY A BREEDING MACHINE SO THAT OUR REPRODUCTIVE CAPACITY IS REDUCED ONLY AT RISK TO OURSELVES? OR...</p>



Linda St-Louis

ABORTION

you grieve
at your loss
my blood
stains
our sheets

Sage Sinats

BEHIND THE RULES

hello
limbo...
and watch
sad faces empty spaces
frightened nipples of insecurity
...such pretty
masks of death of life
of burned-out
hatred of
breath behind the rules
black bus windows
...mannequins
hollow and weeping
seeping under eyelids
seeking the pores of
even hard shells
getting through to
kill the clam
subtle ramming
down choking
throats of
seeing
seething
breathing
masks of death of life

Jill Zacharias

Woman from El Salvador
seen in a documentary

The woman holds up her shirt
Only a scar where her breast was
A warning to all women
The machete cuts off my breast too
The boy soldiers
have studied porn to learn about women

Her shirt held up
She is not humiliated
She will show her scar to anyone
The machete can only slice her flesh
She has family, community
She will not hide the wounds
that tell the story of war

No more hidden hurts
Feel the woman's scar
Imagine revealing your intimate wound
to a stranger's camera
Imagine still trusting
still having hope

Nora Ready

Plain

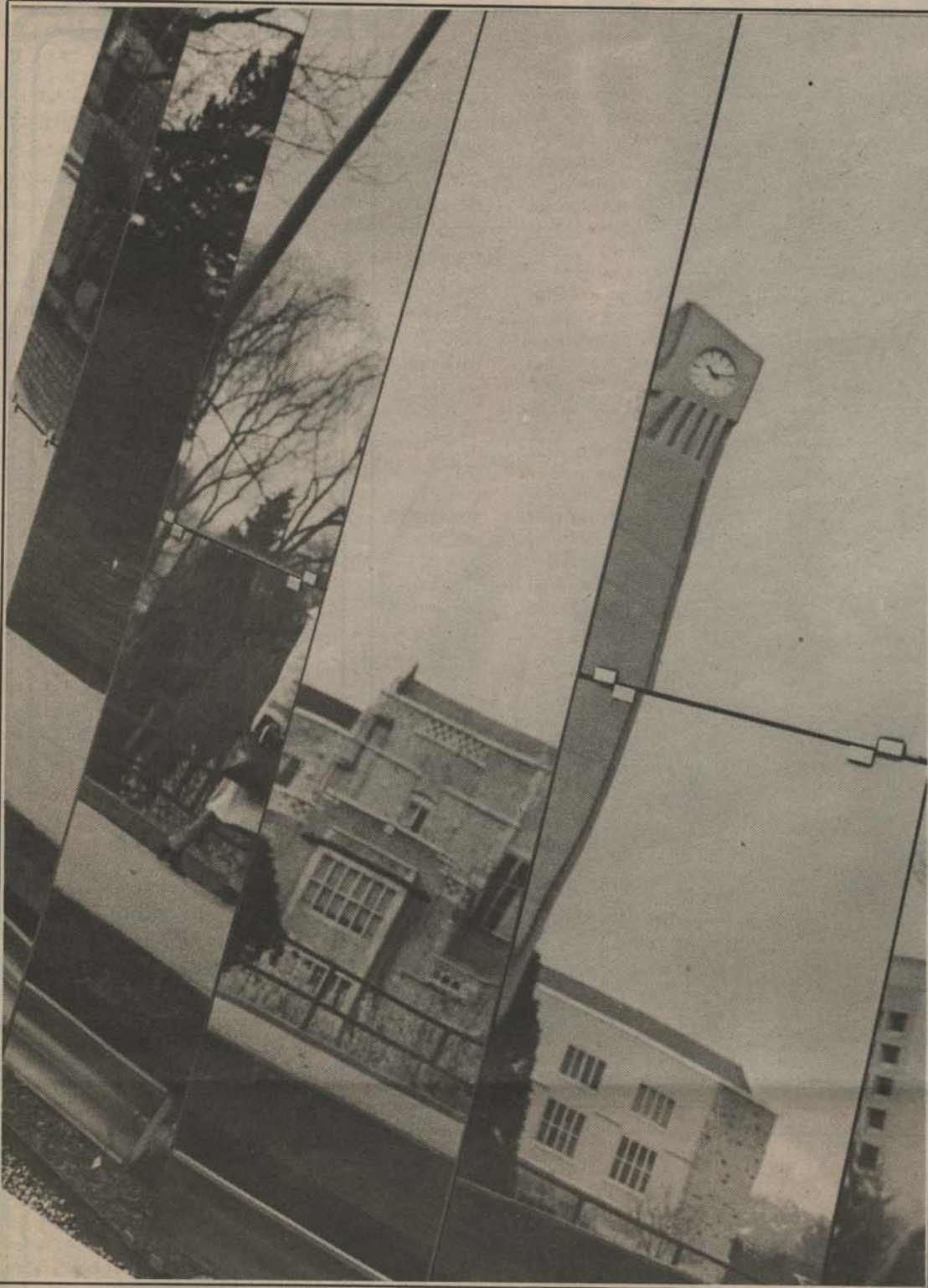
i like plain
nothing extra
lots of room to decorate
or sometimes
just to keep it simple
i erase the L
and look at pain

Michelle Eshom

Look at Lovers

Triangles point
earthward
not less than a hint
of symmetry revolves
framed
in pulsing shadow
tears strung or pearls
beaded mist
sweat on your brow.

Michelle Eshom



Ellen Saenger

CHASING LIZARDS

Camarones
 nos gustaba
 camarones
 con limon
 shrimp scale rivers
 flowed between cracked
 indian feet.
 speaking non-english
 we ate our boots
 for the children laughing
 who would not take the candy
 our gringo hands offered
 The Virgin of Guadalupe
 watches all.

Sage Sinats

Cheque Please

Buttery young bourgeois
 twitter around
 ripe for the carving.

I tango with bureaucrats
 shuffle, paper, shuffle
 they stomp on my toes.

The lumpy office oyster
 frowns come back Wednesday
 I thank him.

I smoke next to a greasy fat-boy
 he eats french fries
 I do knot.

Erin Mullan

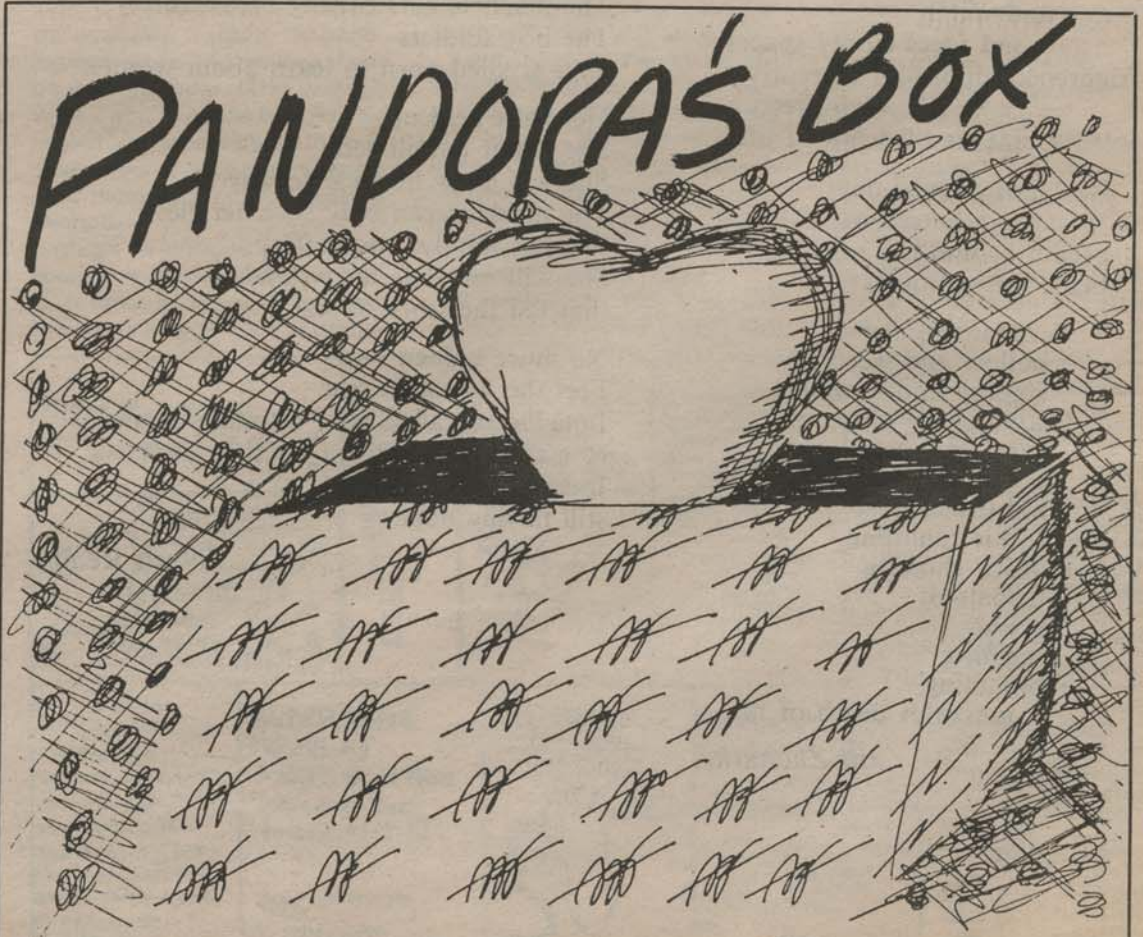
OF FARMS AND FIELDS

That day I saw nothing but
 the tan dusty winding road
 Rolling hills and swaying
 rippling fields now and then
 broken by fence posts and
 simple houses.

As I walked kicking rounded
 pebbles the dog Beau lept
 Lolling tongue flowing hair
 red with flecks of sunlight
 Disappearing in spurts of
 waving tail.

Connected only by whistles
 and calling shouts and barks
 Both moving in our worlds
 of farms and fields appreciating
 Stillness and motion, companions
 capturing peace.

Jill Zacharias



Sage Sinats

Sage Sinats



Ellen Saenger

ANTICIPATING YOUR RETURN

Your spirit invades me
through the saturated green
of filtered light
and forest canopy...

Shafts of sunlight shine in patches
on the fragrant open floor
echoing the wind-driven
patterns of clouds...

Barefeet carry us (as older children)
down dusty packed-dirt roads
and the peacefulness undoes me
to these thoughts of you.

Gayle Nelson

FRIENDS

A piece of filigreed glass
hangs
turning
in the last rays of evening sun
at winter solstice

It is dark so early...
and the blue light
of this rare day
Shines with the aching clarity
of refracted light
suffused through time

It is the shine
and color of the hour
that make me catch my breath
and hang suspended in
this moment of captured light and glass

Standing
reflecting back
on all that we have shared
in these short revolving years.

Gayle Nelson

RED WINE AND ROSES

How dare you
when dark February
denies us birthdates and valentines,
joke of Sylvia Plath
of endless sleep and roses.

You search in the decanter
for a memory: of your son,
or a lover's comfort,
and glide on the black ice
of your reflection
into an unmarked river;
forgetting, again, to trail
the white cord of your telephone.

It is harmless, you say,
spinning into your private river —
your new-found friend —
trusting the currents,
trusting the ice in the spring.

Is that where I will find you,
somewhere near dawn,
fanning angel wings in the snow
until some bare-armed suitor, descending,
comes to lull you into
perfect sleep?

Cheryl Howrigan



Linda St-Louis



Sania Poluch

Grandmother

She spends her days dodging pain
 She worries that tomorrow her teeth will ache,
 today it's her legs
 Oh to feel light again
 instead of heavy with hurt
 Why were those days of constant care,
 the days of Nanny's rule,
 so short?

She fades in and out
 Now little girl, now great granny
 At least there are always tea and cakes
 and those middle-aged visitors
 who call her mother

Nora Ready

INCEST

My daddy loves me best
 he tells me so
 as he lays me down to sleep
 him heavy on my hollow body.

*

bright pink walls
 man crouched in
 dark corners

*

I'm hiding
 I'm hiding
 and no one knows where
 for when you look at me
 you think I'm all there

*

as a young woman
 you called me
 Hard Nosed Bitch
 if only that hard nose
 like steel
 could stab your white throat
 blood running.

Sage Sinats

Kid in a Juvenile Hall

Crush it
 Tear its petals off
 Mutilate its stem,
 You sit killing flowers
 Because
 Everyone loves them
 They're beautiful
 You kill them

Your hands say: look
 We're slaughtering a rhododendrum
 This can happen
 A thing can be destroyed
 Even if it's beautiful
 And harmless
 And good.

Michelle Eshom

Spanish Morning

No telling where you'd be now
 Had you not run in a crowd to greet the ships,
 Had you looked on with eyes less gentle
 While they walked up the shore to the village
 And called it their own.

Leslie Hamilton



Sania Poluch



On the Streets of Victoria

by Teresa Sankey & Pam Blackstone

From September to December 1983, Women Against Pornography (WAP) interviewed Victoria prostitutes. Our purpose was to learn about their lives and to ascertain what changes they would like to see in the law. The women were friendly and co-operative; open to our feminism as may "straight" people (ie. non-prostitute) are not.

The hatred and violence directed against these women was the reality of prostitutes'

lives we found most difficult to deal with.

Prostitutes receive continuous verbal abuse and threats from self-righteous passersby and leering men. WAP members experienced this directly, as any women on the street at night is often assumed to be a prostitute. It's a real eye-opener to have a man shout "I want to rape you" from a family station-wagon, and be expected to receive this as a compliment. Or to be grabbed about the waist and have "Hey twat! How much?" hissed in your

ear. Last week, several men in a car laughed at our appearance ("straight", no make-up, duffle coats, and boots): "Those two broads must be cheaper than the ones on the corner." Adolescent boys often drive by screaming "Herpes!" (less than 5% of V.D. originates from prostitution). One night a prostitute was struck in the head by pennies hurled at her from a passing car.

80% of our respondents indicated violence from clients and passersby was a problem. In the last two weeks one

woman was nearly strangled to death and two others were beaten and robbed. In December, one "outraged citizen" attempted to run four of us (two prostitutes, two WAP members) down in her car as we were standing talking on the sidewalk. She proceeded to run two red lights, screaming out her windows about "filthy whores". In the summer of 1983 Donna Mitchell — a friend of several women we spoke with — became a homicide statistic.

In light of the above, it's galling that men, on a recent

CHEK-TV newscast, can whine about feeling "harassed" and "inconvenienced" at having been flashed "knowing smiles" on Government Street.

WAP continues to maintain a weekly presence on the street. We are currently distributing a leaflet on legal rights and resources for women in Victoria. In addition, WAP is organizing with local prostitutes to publish a weekly "bad trick sheet" which will alert women on the street to dangerous customers.

Prostitution: "Surviving is what this is all about"

Prostitutes do not create prostitution. The socially sanctioned ideology of commodity and consumption, expressed in a sexist social structure, creates the conditions for prostitution. The roots of prostitution lie in the economic oppression of women and the socialization of both men and women to view a woman's body as her only valued asset. The sexual bargaining of the prostitute is symbolic of the sexual and economic status of women as a class.

Prostitution can be defined as the exchange of sex for considerations other than erotic ones (usually money or material rewards). The term "prostitute" has traditionally referred only to those women who are prepared to resist poverty, or the threat of it, by proclaiming their sexual availability on the street. Because such women are highly visible they are easy to socially ostracize and brand as "bad", deviant, and immoral. Here is where the hypocrisy begins: society creates the conditions for prostitution and then condemns the women who act out its expectations.

The source of public offense appears to be, not the exchange taking place, but the visibility of the prostitute's negotiations. This attitude is enshrined in the present law which does not prohibit prostitution per se, but prohibits soliciting for the purpose of prostitution.

It is also evident in public opinion on this issue:

"It goes on anyway, and I'd prefer not to have it on Government Street — it's tawdry, and it hurts the image of the city." (Mayor Peter Pollen, quoted in the *City Wide Star*, Nov. 23, 1983, in response to a question about the lack of investigation into local "escort services")

"...Victoria's Government Street area will have yet another summer of vacuum-headed floozies flaunting their shopworn wares in a totally objectionable manner." (columnist Gorde Hunter, emphasis ours)

It is a male consumerist attitude toward female sexuality which creates the market for the commodity which prostitutes sell. A law which sees the women who supply sex as illegal and immoral, rather than the men who demand their services, is hypocritical and sexist.

Anti-soliciting laws exist to protect men from the unwanted sexual approaches of women. No such law exists to protect women from the unwelcome advances of men. Daily, women are accosted, propositioned, insulted, and threatened on the street with no legal recourse.

The typical customer of a prostitute is white, middle-class, middle-aged, and married. Among her clientele are police officials, judges, and politicians — the same men who are involved in arresting, sentencing, and legislating against prostitutes.

Present and proposed laws target a certain, identifiable class of women who are forced to work the street. The Vancouver Alliance for the Safety of Prostitutes estimates almost all street prostitutes come from lower middle-class and working-class families; between 60 and 70% are single parents; 50% are from racial minorities; and 70 to 80% were sexually or physically abused as children. Such laws rarely are directed against "call girls" who operate out of hotels and escort services, who are employed by corporations to service conventions, or women who contract their sexual services to one man at a time.



The Legal Options

Prohibition doesn't work. Women are forced back on the street to earn the money to pay off fines and legal fees. Incarceration increases the likelihood of future criminal involvement. Driving prostitution off the streets increases the number and power of pimps;

women disappear unnoticed; and the involvement of juveniles becomes hidden. Enforcement is costly. Charges against clients are rare.

Legalization institutionalizes women's oppression. In effect, the state becomes a pimp. Legalized brothels are sex fac-

tories. Women who have worked in them describe the working conditions as appalling:

"At the Mustang Ranch in Nevada the brothel takes 70% of a woman's income. Out of her 30% one third goes to taxes and with the rest she must pay room and board. The women are required to work 12-18 hours a day. They are not allowed to refuse a client. They cannot demand the men wear safes. In order to leave the brothel grounds permission must be obtained."

This is state-run prostitution. It is precisely what many so-called "progressive" thinkers advocate for Canada.

Decriminalization is the option feminist and prostitutes' organizations support. With decriminalization all soliciting and bawdy house laws would be abolished. Along with demanding repeal, we propose funds presently spent on enforcement should be re-allocated to the alleviation of the causes of prostitution and the creation of tangible resources for prostitutes, both child and adult (ie. job and life-skills training, affordable child care, adequate welfare rates, and child abuse prevention teams).

Decriminalization would give prostitutes control over their working lives. Women would be able to leave the streets to work in their homes or collectively owned houses. The number and power of pimps would be reduced. The problems presented by cruising clients and onlookers could be handled under existing nuisance by-laws and appropriate sections of the Criminal Code.

Decriminalization will not eliminate prostitution. Only fundamental social change — changes in the status of all women, changes which address the socio-economic conditions which give rise to and perpetuate prostitution — will achieve this goal.

Copies of Women Against Pornography's brief on prostitution which was presented to the Fraser Committee can be obtained by writing to: W.A.P., Box 2363, Sidney, B.C., V8L 3Y3 (include cheque for \$6 — xeroxing and postage).

HEALING and EMPOWERING Workshops for Women

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Punk: Invisible Women, Show Yourself

by Erin Mullan

Like most cities in the western world, Victoria has spawned its very own punk sub-culture. Angry kids popping up all over the place, with cropped hair and bad attitudes.

The whole mess began in England about six or seven years ago. An entire generation on the dole, left jobless by one of those downward lurches capitalist economies are prone to. All pissed off and no place to go, the young people of Britain took the rebellion route.

Except this time it was ugly. Safety pins piercing flesh, slashed clothing, violent music and the Sex Pistols barfing in airports were more than enough to send the good citizens of the free world into shudders of disgust. The no future generation, sprouting like mushroom clouds in the fertile nuclear imagination, brought their message home. The lies you've taught us are meaningless crap, so don't expect us to behave, don't expect us to conform, the punks told their parents.

"I know I'm artificial/but don't put the blame on me/I was reared with appliances/in a consumer society. When I put on my make-up/the pretty mask not me/that's the way a girl should be/in a consumer society." sang Poly-styrene and legions of kids agreed with her.

Punk hit a nerve. It's a mixed bag of anger, frustration and despair with a touch of hope through fighting back.

No wonder many women found a place to vent their spleens in punk. The parallel between punk and "the personal is political" is hard to miss. Living the revolution now instead of living for it is the common ground. It goes against the "join us and we'll fix you up once we're in control" attitude of much of the Left.

In more specific terms, punk resulted in a breakdown between the performer and the audience. Musical ability often took a backseat to inventiveness. With small independent record labels springing up everywhere, new avenues opened up for many people, including women. You didn't have to be a rock veteran to pick up a guitar and bang out a song. It became possible to take lyrical content beyond the monogamous monotony of true love ditties.

"I'm not a pretty package/to titillate your prick/stuff your revolution/your insults make me stick/you've had your final warning/we've all run out of time/better get a lead lined jock strap/of the very best design." —*Vi Subversa* of Poison Girls.

All female bands or groups with women taking the lead are becoming more and more common. The Raincoats, Crass, the Au Pairs, Moral Lepers, X-ray Spex, Poison Girls, Penetration, Nina Hagen, and Siouxsie and the Banshees are a partial list of artists from Europe and North America.

These groups are dealing with sexual politics in a fresh and gripping fashion. When Crass sings "In my red high-heels I've no control/the rituals of repression are so old/you can do what you like, there'll be no reprisal/I'm yours, yes I'm yours, it's my means of survival," their anger is palatable. They mean business.

Women's punk bands don't isolate sexism from the other evils of the world. Alienation, nuclear annihilation, powerlessness and the nature of consumerism, capitalism and the state are re-occurring themes. The philosophy of questioning everything is one shared by punks and rad feds alike. No wonder so many feminists have found a haven in punk rock. One example of this is Vi Subversa, a U.K. activist who, in addition to possessing one of the most clever names ever invented, is responsible for the slogan "take the toys away from the boys", and is the lead singer for Poison Girls.

Punk goes beyond the music. Take the clothes for instance. The anti-fashion fashion allows women to have a bit of fun, dressing for comfort and to outrage, all the while mocking the cripple clothes considered stylish. The days of sticking pins in one's face have passed; now it's outlandish hairdos and second hand specials. There is still some conformity — plenty of black and leather — but the amount of room for individuality cannot be denied.

The band The Slits decided to do what they considered an erotic cover for their album *Cut*. The result is a photo of the three women standing defiantly in front of some very English roses, dressed only in loinclothes, mud and warpaint. I find the effect marvelous, although I suspect most men would think The Slits rather frightening, not at all like the porno images of women one sees everywhere.

The fear of strong women does create tensions within the punk world, the same as anywhere else. The North American hardcore punk scene is particularly male-dominated, with the boys in the bands slam-dancing at the front while the girls sit on the sidelines. It's just more of the same stuff in a new package: you tell yourself you're rebelling against everything yet you never question something as basic as gender roles.

Much of the women's music is reviled by male punks as not good enough or hard enough or not whatever enough. More likely the message from the new girls groups makes too much sense. It's very easy to dismiss something instead of dealing with it.

To be fair, there are many men in the punk scene who are trying to confront their sexism. There is frequently a willingness to discuss sexual politics and in almost every punk community I've seen there is greater acceptance of gays and lesbians than in other parts of society.

But for the males who are only paying lip service or trying to be politically correct, the Au Pairs have these words

"You're one of those/who changed the game/you brought in new rules/which you obey/coping, coping, coping-or nearly anyway/but is it real? are you feeling it?/you behave like a model/for others to follow."

So what does it all mean? Just another generation of rowdy kids who'll calm down in a few years and settle for a nine to five grind and Hibachi-land in the suburbs, if they're lucky enough to get work?

For many punks, the chances of eventually conforming are probably pretty good. Being an outcast gets tiresome; just ask any conscious woman or openly gay person. Patti Smith the punk poet who came with great lines like "Spare the child and spoil the rod/I have not sold myself to God" is now a born-again Christian housewife.

Poseur is a term used to describe those who adopt the style of punk but miss the boat on the politics. "I'm a poseur and I don't care/I like to make people stare" sings Poly-styrene.

For those who get burned-out, or those who are just posing, it's a few short steps back to normal city. But for the young women who have begun to question the values of society, and what place those values have in their lives, the road back to numb acceptance and conformity is not so easy. Once the questioning process begins it's hard to halt, as most feminists know.

Emily is a woman in her early thirties, an artist with two children. She has been around the punk scene longer than most. Her definition of punk is simple: it's an attitude. It's not the clothes you wear or the music you listen to so much as the way you look at the world.

I think Emily's definition is a good one. The ability to laugh loud and harsh at genuinely terrifying realities, like possible global death, is perhaps the finest quality of punk. Feminists are often accused of having no sense of humor. The people who make this charge obviously never listened to the Au Pairs or any of the other new women's music.

Punk will change, and probably pass into something else. If it remained static it would become boring, which is the antithesis of what it's all about. But the countless women who've come into their own through punk are not going to go away. We're a whole mess of brazen shit-disturbers who'll be raising hell and rampaging 'til our thrashing is through. What could be better?

This is a conclusion, not an ending. It comes from the back cover of *Total Exposure*, an album by Poison Girls. They write "invisible people, show yourselves. People in hiding, come out. Say what you want. Show who you are. Reclaim the life that is left. Those who desire peace and freedom must create a new economy. The economy of peace will depend on a currency to trust. Invisible people, show yourselves. There are more of us than you think."

Calynder

Thursday Feb. 16

N.D.P. Club's Spring Lecture Series

- Stella Lord will be speaking on "Equal pay for work of equal value"
- time: 12:30-1:30 p.m.
- place: Cle A206

The Thursday Thing

- series of writings by writers arranged by the Creative Writing Department
- Phyllis Webb, a faculty member and winner of the Governor-General's Medal in poetry, 1984 for her selected poems, *The Vision Tree*.
- time: 5:30-6:30 p.m.
- place: MacLaurin 144

Monday Feb. 20

Volunteer Crisis Line Training Sessions

- time: 7:00-9:00 p.m.
- place: 1045 Linden Ave., Women's Sexual Assault Centre of Victoria.
- call: 383-5545 between 9-5 p.m., Monday to Friday to arrange an interview.

Wednesday Feb. 22

Lecture Series of Women in Politics

- presented by Women's Caucus of Poli Sci Course Union
- Josephine Payne O'Connor will be speaking
- time: 7:00 p.m.
- place: Cor A372

Wednesday-Friday Feb. 22-24

The 1984 Annual Conference of the Canadian Forum: Association for Women in the Justice System

- topic of forum: Violent Images, Acts and Attitudes — their impact on women

- place: Island Hall Resort Hotel, Island Hwy., Parksville
- call: Susie Walsh or Jean Lawrence at 228-9771 for more info.

Saturday-Sunday Feb. 25-26

Celebration, Healing and Empowering Workshops for Women

- chance to reclaim, release blocked emotional energy in a supportive and nurturing environment.
- workshop leader: Sara Joy David
- fee: sliding scale, Minimum \$35
- place: 1165 Fairfield Rd.
- call: 385-2954 for more info. and registration.

Tuesday Feb. 28

Lesbianism, Feminism and Lesbophobia

- a presentation and discussion on lesbianism by SWAG, with Susan Moger and Rowena Hunnisett. The evening will address difficulties we have personally and in women's groups in discussing lesbianism, both as a political and personal issue.
- time: 7:30-10:00 p.m.
- place: Unitarian Lounge, 106 Superior St.
- free admission
- call: 381-1012 for more info.

Thursday March 8

AMS Solidarity Committee Discussion

- Stella Lord will speak on "Women and Work"
- time: 7:30 p.m.
- place: Unicentre Lounge A208

Watch for continuing lectures on Women in Politics presented by the Women's Caucus of Poli Sci Course Union and continuing feminist forums presented by the Women's Centre.

La Leche League in Canada offers 10 groups in the Victoria area, supplying support and info. to breastfeeding women. Call 592-2714 to find a group near you.

International Women's Day Films

Tuesday, March 6

- 12:30 pm Killing Us Softly
- 1:30 pm What Women Want
- 2:00 pm Roll-over
- 2:15 pm Laila
- 2:30 pm I Want to be an Engineer
- 3:00 pm Doctor Woman: The Life and Times of Dr. Elizabeth Bagshaw
- 3:30 pm The Lady from Grey County
- 4:00 pm Ruth and Harriet: Two of the Peace
- 7:00 pm The Originals: Women in Art

Wednesday, March 7

- 1:30 pm Augusta
- 2:00 pm You Have Struck a Rock
- 2:30 pm Shakti — "She is Vital Energy"
- 3:30 pm Some American Feminists

Thursday, March 8

- 1:30 pm Women
- 2:00 pm Maggie
- 2:30 pm Just a Minute
- 3:00 pm Ways of Seeing — part 2
- 3:30 pm The Originals: Women in Art